

**Metro-East
Lead Collaborative
Partners**

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U.S. Housing and Urban Development
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St. Clair County Health Department
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WHY IS LEAD A PROBLEM?

Your Child's **Health**

**Metro-East
Lead Collaborative**

St. Clair County, Illinois

**Know the Dirt
Lead Hurts**



Why is Lead A Problem?

Your Child's Health
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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
in partnership with the
U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

WHY IS LEAD A PROBLEM?

What's the harm in lead?

Although it has been used in numerous consumer products, lead is a toxic metal now known to be harmful to human health if inhaled or ingested. Lead can cause mental and physical health problems such as learning disabilities, high blood pressure and kidney damage.

Does lead affect everyone equally?

Young children, infants, and expected mothers appear to be particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning. Growing children will more rapidly absorb any lead they consume. A child's mental and physical development can be irreversibly stunted by over-exposure to lead.

Are there symptoms for lead poisoning that I should look for in my kids?

Symptoms aren't always apparent, periodic and frequent testing is the best way to detect potential lead poisoning. Nevertheless, if you notice unusual hyperactivity contact your local physician or health department.

When and where can my child be tested for lead?

Have your child tested for lead once every year between the age of 1-6 years of age unless indicated more frequently. Children can be tested at the local health department, pediatricians office, hospital or private labs, as well as in your home (if arranged with a nurse through the local health agency). Testing is also done at local schools by such agencies as St. Mary's Hospital. Contact **St. Mary's Hosital** by calling **482-7074** with any questions about testing at your child's school or any other lead question.



How will doctors check my child for lead? What will they do?

A finger stick or blood taken from the arm are the most common ways to check your child's blood and will only take a few minutes. You will know the results of the blood screening within two weeks.

What does it mean when a doctor says my child has an elevated blood lead level?

Your child has gotten lead in his/her system and it is showing up in the blood test. Any level over 10 decileters is considered to be a concern.

I take good care of my child. How could this happen?



Because your child has been identified with a lead problem doesn't mean you did something wrong. In fact, because of your good care, your child was tested and now professionals can find out where your child came in contact with lead.

What are some ways parents can protect children against lead poisoning?



- Washing children's hands before they eat, after play, and before they go to bed.
- Keep children away from peeling paint.
- Wiping their feet or taking off their shoes when entering your home will keep lead from being brought in.
- Letting your water run ten seconds before using will reduce lead in pipes from being drank.

Around the House



Where is lead found and what does it look like?

When lead is found in homes it is usually found in paint. Lead in its purest state is a grayish color, but you will not see it in the paint. Paint that is chipping, peeling, or broken down to a fine dust is usually found around windows, doors and walls. Lead can be found on exterior surfaces, old lead water piping, or even lead contamination of soil in your yard. If your home was built before 1978 you probably have lead paint in your home.

Is it safe to just paint over peeling paint? Can I do the work myself?

No, you should contact St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department, Lead Hazard Control Program at 277-6790. Although it's advisable to hire a licensed contractor, self-maintenance books are available for owner occupants. Renters are not allowed to do the work themselves. The Lead Hazard Control Program can provide copies of the booklet.

Is assistance available for renters?

Yes, it doesn't matter whether you own or rent the same assistance is available. For more information contact St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants, Lead Hazard Control Program.

How can I maintain my house safely?

The best thing to do is take wet paper towels and wipe up any chipping, peeling, or fine paint dust. Be sure to wear disposable rubber gloves and throw each paper towel away (do not use the same paper towel on multiple surfaces) in a plastic bag. Then call your local governmental office and see if they have a lead hazard program that can help you make your home lead safe.